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THE ERA OF ZARATHUSHTRA

In the Light of Babylonian Researches

By—**The Late Mr. Meherjibhai N. Kuka, M.A.**

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

SPEECH BY
H. I. M. Muhammad Reza Shah Pahalevi

Speech delivered by H. I. M. Muhammad Reza Shah Pahalvi Shahinshah of Iran in reply to the Address and Casket presented to him on Wednesday the 7th March 1956 at the Brabourne Stadium, Bombay, on behalf of the Zoroastrians of India, by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, the Iran League, the Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman of Bombay.

——:o:——

"Mr. Chairman, Dear Zoroastrians of Bombay,

To be today among you has a significance of its own, because you people who have managed to live with dignity and to serve your new country and to prosper, is a sign that you are worthy of all the qualities that we know of you. If it was not for the sentiments of brotherhood and friendship that united and is uniting my country with India, I would say that we regret not to see you in our own country; but there is no difference if you live here or in our own country.

Those Zoroastrians that have stayed in our country, are people fundamentally honest, working, serving their country, and we have them very dear in our heart. I suppose that many of you have relations and some members of your family are still living in Iran, and I hope that there will be so much facility in the future that in order to go and see that old country of Persia will not be at all difficult for you, and that we could have the pleasure of seeing you many times in our land. I am glad and proud that the population of this country have such a regard for you, and that they have also taken you in their hearts as true members and faithful members of this country; and this is a very valuable human quality to serve the country in which one lives with faith, and to give it one's full energy and lifetime, and to secure one's place among the best children of that country.

In thanking you for your warm welcome I pray God that He will keep you always under His blessings, and wish for you all prosperity, happiness and peace!"

——:o:——

Mr. M. N. KUKA, M.A.

—:o:—

A Brief Life Sketch of an Iranian Scholar.

—:x:—

The late Mr. Meherjibhai Noshirwanji Kuka was a self-effacing, shy, unassuming man who has left behind him a treasure of rich enlightening Avestan and Persian literature. One such work that his genius left for posterity is the booklet on the Era of Zoroaster, which is now republished.

The late Mr. Meherjibhai N. Kuka, M.A.

Born : 10-12-1865. A.C. Died : 6-8-1934.

A veteran Parsi scholar.

HIS STUDIES

Meherjibhai's father Ervad Noshirwanji Sorabji Kuka was the Panthaki (head-priest) of the fire-temple at Mhow in Central India. Meherjibhai was born in Mhow on December 10, 1865. He had his early schooling in Mhow and later at Indore. He passed the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University at the tender age of 14, a remarkable achievement in those days. Principal

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THE ERA OF ZOROASTER.

In the Light of Babylonian Researches.

By: The Late Mr. Meherjibhai Nosherwanji Kuka, M.A.

A DISTANT DATE.

In the dim haze of far off antiquity the figure that is just discernible towering above all, and absorbing our attention by its unique personality is that of Zoroaster, the founder of the religion of ancient Iran. The age to which he belongs is so very remote that the eye is often deceived by an illusory image of the far off scene —the forms looming in the distance seem to assume a protean and fantastic features, like objects seen in the gloaming——and it is not therefore strange that the personality of the Prophet of Iran has been viewed and depicted diversely by men of different ages and climes. In the ancient classical literature we see him represented as a mystic, a philosopher, a magician versed in all the occult sciences, while in the Arabic literature he figures merely as a heresiarch, once a disciple of certain Hebrew prophets. To some people he appears a Chaldean, to some a Median, and others a Bactrian. In the later Avesta and in the Pahlavi books though we find him delineated with greater faithfulness, there is at the same time such a halo of myth surrounding him as to make of him more a demigod than a human being—a circumstance which at one time induced some European savants to doubt his very existence. But no one who has thoroughly studied the *Gathas*—the most ancient scriptures of Mazdaism—can have any doubt that Zoroaster is therein a strong living personality—a prophet, priest and reformer, imbued with the lofty idea of his mission and striving to inculcate pure monotheism upon the mind of his age.

THE AGE OF ZOROASTER.

The question of Zoroaster's actual existence is no longer a mooted one. But the subject that has puzzled the best scholars of our day, as no other point of Ancient History has done, is that of the era in which he flourished. While some scholars determine this period to be so old as 2300 B. C.,[1] others fix it at 700 B. C. only. Turning to ancient literature, we find

1. Bunsen fixes the era of Zoroaster at about 3500 B. C. (Egypt's Place in Universal History, Vol. III, p. 584).

the Greek writers assigning to him the age of 6000 years before Plato, or about 6350 B. C., while the Pahlavi writers—themselves the followers of Zoroaster—give the very late date of 300 years previous to Alexander, i. e. about 630 B. C. only. These Iranians, none of whom wrote earlier than the Sassanian period, were so far removed from the age in which Zoroaster lived, that they had a very hazy notion of the intervening centuries, and besides they were sadly wanting in historical knowledge. It is a remarkable fact that both the Indians and the Iranians, while they cultivated other sciences, strangely neglected this branch of literature. The earliest historical documents of the Iranians are the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings, but it is doubtful whether any of the Pahlavi writers knew how to decipher them for their writings betray a deplorable ignorance of even the names of most of the kings of that dynasty.

The present age, however, having at its command, the researches made in the last century into various departments of knowledge, such as Philology, Science of Religion, Babylonian Literature, &c., is in a better position to take a survey of the far off regions of Ancient History. In fact the searchlight of the first two sciences has already been thrown on the Era of Zoroaster, though with indifferent results. But the search-light of Assyriology which has not been hither to emlpoyed is, as it will be presently shown, more powerful for this special purpose, able to penetrate in intervening mists, and capable of furnishing us with the data for forming a more correct estimate of the distance which separates Zoroaster's age from ours.

THE GATHAS AND THE RIGVEDA.

Philologists had already shown the strong resemblance which the language of the *Gathas* of Zoroaster bears to that of most ancient portions of the *Rig Veda,* but till the beginning of the present century it was not definitely proved that the two scriptures themselves were contemporaneous. This has, however, been done now by a learned Parsi scholar, Ervad Shehriyarji Dadabhai Bharucha, who in an essay published in the "*K. R. Cama Memorial Volume,*" has shown that certain passages in the *Gathas* are referred to in the *Rig Veda* and *vice versa.* If the antiquity of the *Vedas* could be definitely established, it would serve to fix the age of the *Gathas* also, but on the former point too there is no consensus of opinion among oriental scholars. They assign to the *Vedas* various dates ranging from B. C. 2300 to B. C. 1200. Mr. Bâl Gangâdhar Tilak of Poona, in a work called "*Orion or The Antiquity of the Vedas,*" published in 1893, has

shown that the *Vedas* were composed sometime between B. C. 6000 and B. C. 4000, that is, at the time when the Vernal Equinox point was in Orion. This is a more trustworthy evidence than that relied on by other scholars, viz., the evidence from the changes which a language undergoes in the course of time; for, Asiatic languages are more conservative in this respect, and the changes in them occur much more slowly than they do in European languages.

Setting aside, however, the question of the antiquity of the Vedas, let us proceed to examine what independent and conclusive evidence is avilable from other sources for fixing the landmarks of Zoroaster's age.

BEROSUS ON MEDIAN KINGS.

From the fragments of Berosus, the Babylonian priest and historian, which have been quoted by some Greek writers, it appears that Babylonia was in very ancient times ruled by eight Median kings who bore the name of Zoroaster.[1] Gutschmidt has shown that this period of their rule must have been between B.C. 2458 to B.C. 2234,[2] but it is possible the period may have been somewhat earlier. We find no allusion to this rule in the Babylonian tablets and inscriptions hitherto deciphered, but we shall see hereafter what confirmatory evidence of it can be evolved from recent Babylonian researches.

JEWISH MONTHS.

The German scholar Benfey, in a work called *Monats Namen*, published many years ago, was the first to show that most of the names of the Jewish months are derivable from those of the Iranian (i.e., Zoroastrian) months, and that the order of names in the former is the same as in the latter. It was not then known that the Jewish months were identically the same as those of the Babylonian Calendar which had been in use since the time of Hammurabi[3] (i.e., since c. 2300 B.C.).

Benfey's remarks therefore apply equally to the Babylonian months, and tend to confirm the existence of a Zoroastrian sway over Babylonia sometime before B. C. 2300. A summary of this theory is reproduced here in a tabulated form for the convenience of the reader.

1 It is possible that they called themselves "*Zarthustrish*" which, in the Avesta language means "a follower of Zoroaster". This word transliterated into Greek becomes "*Zoroastres*", the same as the name Zoroaster itself, which was so pronounced owing to the propensity of the Greeks to add to names the suffix *s*, or s preceded by a vowel. There seems to have thus originated the misconception about the eight kings all named Zoroaster.

2 Rawlinson's "Five Great Monarchies", Vol, I.

3 Vide "Civilization of the East," by Dr. Fritz Hommel. The Babylonian-Akkadi names of the months were different.

Babylonian Months.	Corresponding Iranian Months.	Derivation.
(1) Nisan	Dathusho or Dae	Avesta Naba-azana= New Year's day.
(2) Iyar	Vohumano or Behman	... ...
(3) Sivan	Spenta-Armaiti or Aspandad	A corrupted form of the first syllable '*spenta*' of the Iranian Month.
(4) Tammuz	Fravashinam or Farvardin	... ...
(5) Ab	Ashavahishta or Ardibehesht	.. ..
(6) Elul	Haurvatat or Khordad	A corrupted form of *Haurvat.*
(7) Tishri	Tishtriya or Tir	A contracted form of *Tishtriya.*
(8) March-eshvan	Ameretat or Amerdad	The first syllable is a derivative of *Ameretat.*
(9) Kislev	Khshathravairya or Shehrivar	A contrated form of the Iranian name.
(10) Tebat	Mithra or Meher	.. ..
(11) Shebat	Apam or Aban	... .
(12) Adar	Atro, Atar or Adar	The identical form as the Iranian *Adar.*

THE ORDER OF THE IRANIAN MONTHS

In the Irranian months we notice the names of the celestial beings worshipped by the Zoroastrians. That these names were not given haphazard, but were based on physical phenomena, has been shown by the present writer in an essay, on "*The Order of Parsee Months and the Basis of their Nomenclature*", in the "*K. R. Cama Memorial Volume*"[1] from which a few extracts are reproduced here, with some additions and alterations.

Dathusho or *Dae.*—This month, named after the Creator, was the first month of spring, and marked the revival (or new creation) of Nature.

Vohumano (Behman).—Named after the archangel having the special care of cattle, this was the month of Mid spring. Plentiful

1. Published in Bombay, 1901.

flow of milk in cows[1] was the special feature of this month, and in this respect it was analogous to the *'Tri-milchi'* (May) of the old Saxons.

Spenta armaiti (Aspendarmad). Named after the guardian angel of land, this month marked the growth of flowers, herbs and corn. A similarly named month of later times was the 'Prairial' of the French Republican Calendar.

Fravashinam (Farvardin).—This was the month dedicated to the spirits of the ancestors. It began on or about the Summer Solstice, which was the period dedicated to the festival of the Dead by various other nations of antiquity. The month ran parallel to *Thot* of the Egyptians and *Tammuz* of the Semites.

Ashavahishta (Ardibeheshta).—Named after the Ameshaspenta presiding over Heat, this month was the hottest part of the year, being the second month of Summer and co-extensive with the Dog-days, with the *Garmapada* of the Cuneiform Inscriptions of Darius, and with the *Thermidor* of the French Republican Calendar.

Haurvatat (Khordad).—Named after the Lord of the Waters and of the Clouds, this was the month in which, for the most part, the sky was overcast as a result of the evaporation which had been most energetic in the previous month.

Tishtriya (Tir).—Named after the Star Tishtriya or Sirius, who was regarded as the Bringer of Rain. This was the month in which the rains set in, and which commenced with the Autumnal Equinox. In very remote ages the acronycal rising of Sirius marked the advent of the rainy season.

Ameretat (Amerdad).—Abundant growth of vegetation, due to the rainfall of the previous month, characterised this month which was consequently named after the Lord of Vegetation.

Khshathravairya (Shehrivar).—A satisfactory explanation of which this name was given to the 9th month from the Vernal Equinox has not yet been discovered.

Mithra (Mehr).—Mithra means 'increasing day-light'. The month named after this angel was the first month of Winter, and

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1. Owing to this being the calving season. My theory about this month receives confirmation from the name of the Babylonian second month *Iyar*. Professor Jastrow, speaking of this month, says, (in his "Religion of Babylonia and Assyria" p. 464, Foot Note) "Iyar is described by a series of ideographs 'heard' and 'to prosper'. Is there perhaps a reference to cows giving birth to calves in this month, the early spring ? "

commenced at the Winter Solstice, from which point the Day begins to increase in length.[1]

Apam (Avan).—Literally "The Waters". But this name is generally coupled with that of 'Ardavisur', the female *yazata* presiding over rivers and on purification. In the latter character she is analogous to 'Februa' the Goddess of Purification,[2] the month dedicated to whom was February, which ran parallel to this month.

Atro (Adar).—Atro is fire, and the last month of Winter was so named owing to the thaw taking place, and consequently the weather being very chilly and moist, necessitating fires being kept burning in various parts of the house.

From the basis underlying the nomenclature of the Iranian months, as explained above, it is evident that they are not of foreign origin but of indigenous growth, and since many of them can be recognized in the Babylonian Calendar dating from the twenty-fourth century B.C., it clearly follows that the latter nation is indebted to the former in this respect, and that the borrowing must have taken place at the time of the Zoroastrian rule in Babylonia in the twenty-fifth century B.C. Additional details about some of the Babylonian months will be given further on.

We now proceed to examine the evidence furnished by the Babylonian tablets concerning the Pantheon, the festivals, the religi-ous rites, and the legends of the Babylonians.

It would not be out of place to give here, for the benefit of those readers who are not acquainted with Assyriological researches, a short account[3] of how these tablets were discovered and what they treat of.

In the year 1842 Monsieur Botta, the French Consul at Mosul, while making excavations of certain mounds near Khorsabad, unearthed the remains of an Assyrian palace. The sculptures and monu-

1 When Mithraic worship was introduced into Rome, the festival of the new Sun god, which was known as 'Dies Natalis Solis Invictis', (the birth-day of the Invincible Sun), was celebrated on the Winter Solstice Day, i. e. on the 25th December (old style). The Egyptians in their paintings represented the Winter Solstice Sun as infant.

2 The Purification Day of the Romans fell on the 2nd of February. If we take the 25th December as corresponding to the 1st day of the month Mehr, the second of February would correspond to the 10th day of Avan the festival day of the Iranian goddess.

In like manner a little backward calculation will show that the seventh day of Amerdad, the festival day of the archangel presiding over vegetation and fruits, corresponds with the 1st of November, on which was celebrated the Roman "Festival of Pomona", sacred to the goddess of Fruits and Gardens.

3. Summarised from Professor Jastrow's work cited above.

ments that he came across, most of them inscribed with cuneiform characters, he sent to the Louvre Museum. The importance of the valuable finds induced the authorities of the British Museum to start excavations on their own account. Their representative Mr. (afterwards Sir) Austen Henry Layard commenced operations first at Mount Nimrud and then at Mound Koyunjik; and during the years 1845 to 1850 he was successful in bringing to light the remains of other palaces. But the most valuable of his finds was a library of the Assyrian King Asshurbani-pal. This consisted of clay tablets inscribed all over with cuneiform characters, and treating of various subjects, such as Astronomy, Mathematics, History, Epics, Legends, Hymns, Incantations, &c., some of the last two being in the old Akkadian language, with Semitic translations. A stimulus was given to further research by these discoveries, and in 1887 the Americans also joined the English and the French. The efforts of the representatives of these nations were crowned with success, and many important discoveries were, and are still being made. It is worthy of note that the key to the decipherment of the Semitic cuneiform characters was furnished by the trilingual[1] inscriptions of Darius Hystaspes on the Behistun Rock. The first successful attempt to decipher the Achaemenian or Old Persian inscriptions of Darius was made in 1802 by Grotefend,[2] and by 1840 the decipherment of these inscriptions was practically complete. The ninety proper names in the first columns (i.e. of the old Persian inscription) greatly facilitated the decipherment of the inscriptions in the third column i.e. the one in the Semitic-Babylonian characters. Since then the science of decipherment has advanced by rapid strides; various scholars of note have devoted their attention to it, and now there is hardly any Babylonian inscription that cannot be read and understood, although there might be differences of opinion regarding the pronunciation[3] of certain proper names.

We now know that the earliest settlers in Babylonia were a Turanian nation, who spoke an agglutinative language now called

1. i.e. The Achaemenian (Old Persian), Susian (or Proto-Median), and Babylonian languages.

2. He proceeded on the assumption that certain groups of letters frequently recurring must be the name and titles of a king, and the first line that he deciphered was "*Adam Daryavush Kshayuthiya vazarka Kshayathiya Kshayathiyanam*"—"I am Darius the Great King, the King of Kings."

3. The inscriptions are not all in the same kind of characters; in the oldest the form used is hieroglyphic, then comes the ideographic, and lastly a combination in which the ideograms or their phonetic equivalents are used with syllabic signs. Though the sense conveyed by an ideogram is clear, it is difficult to give the proper pronunciation of it, when there are two or more words in the language for expressing the same idea.

Akkadian or Shumerian, and that they were followed by the Semites who intermingled with them and adopted their religion, so much so that after a time the language used by the combined nation for the ordinary purposes of life was the Semitic language, but the one used in the religious chants and hymns was the Turanian.

The ancient Greek writers have thrown some light on the religion of Babylonia, but what we know from these sources is very little, compared with what can be gathered from the inscriptions. The full details now to hand regarding the names and attributes of the gods worshipped in Babylonia, point, as will be presently shown, towards ancient Iran as the birth place of some of these deities. In support of this view an exposition will first be made of the points of similarity between the religious ideas of the two nations, concerning the functions and attributes of their gods and the celebration of their sacred rites and festivals; proofs will then be adduced to show in what respects the Babylonians have borrowed from the Zoroastrians; and finally an attempt will be made to indicate the Age in which this transplantation of ideas could have taken place. This will enable us to determine the hithermost limit of the age of Zoroaster.

In the Babylonian Pantheon the gods are not all of one age; we see traces of new gods having been introduced at different times. For our present purpose the classification followed will be, with some slight modifications, the one given in Professor Jastrow's excellent book on "*The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*," *viz*:—(1) The gods prior to the days of Hommurabi (i.e., before B. C. 2300), (2) new gods appearing in the historical inscriptions from the time of Hammurabi and his successors, and (3) new gods appering from the time of the Assyrian Empire.

GODS PRIOR TO THE DAYS OF HAMMURABI.

Among these, the following are of special note:

Hea—called also Ea and Yav. He was god of the Waters and of Health. As a water god he was also the giver of fertility and plenty.[1] He was a god of the physicians, and it was he that was chiefly invoked in the incantations, for curing all sorts of diseases. The earliest inscription in which his name occurs is that of Ur-Bau (c. 2800 B.C.). The name 'Hea' is composed of two elements that signify 'house' and 'water'.[2] The Greeks translated Ea by *Kronos* (Time), and regarded the two gods as parallels.

1. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 136.
2. Do. do. p. 64.

The corresponding *Ameshaspenta* (arch-angel) of the Zoroastrians is HAURVATAT (or Khordad), who presides over waters, and the seasons.[1] 'Haurvatat' means *health*, as well as *abundance* and *plenty*.

In Yashts II. and IV., and in the Sirozahs wherever there is a mention of this Ameshaspenta, we find mentioned in the same breath the '*yairiyamcha hushitoyish*' or 'the yearly good dwelling'[2] Haurvatat is also met with in the contracted form *Haurvat*, in the Avesta, *Hea* or *Yav* is possibly a further contraction of this. Additional points of similarity between these two gods, the Babylonian and the Zoroastrian, will be brought forward in the section treating of Marduk.

Bau—also read 'Bagash'. She was the goddess 'who fixed the destinies of men, and provided abundance for the tillers of the soil.' Her worship was much prevalent in the days of Gudea (c. 3000 B.C.). Her festival had assumed such importance as to serve for reckoning the commencement of the year, which took place in the beginning of spring, on the first day of 'Nisan', and it was known as the *zag-muka* i.e., the 'New year's day.

The Avesta name corresponding to this is BAGHA. Bau, Bagha, and Bangha are philologically the transformations of one and the same word; for instance, a name 'Averethra-bangha' occuring in Yasht XIII, 106, becomes 'Averethra-bau' in the 'Dinkard'.

Bagha, in the Avesta language, has several meanings:—(1) A portion; (2) Luck, fortune; (3) Divine Power, Distributor, one who apportions (destiny). In the last sense it is used in Yasht VII, 5. In the cuneiform inscriptions of Darius Hystaspes the words *Bagha vazarka* (Great Deity) frequently occur as an epither of Ahuramazda. Again, in the names of certain months given in the same inscriptions we come across the name *Bagha yadaish* (i.e., consecrated to Bagha) which corresponded to Nisan[3] the first month of Spring, or the month in which *zag muku*, the festival of Bau, was celebrated in Babylonia.

1. O'Neill, *Night of the Gods*, Vol. I., p. 77.

2. The meaning according to Spiegel.

3. According to Sir H. Rawlinson and Max Duncker. Oppert and Justi, however, regard it as a parallel month to Tishri. But no doubt the former view is correct, for the undermentioned evidence goes to prove that Baghayadaish was the first month of Spring :—

Darius tells us in his inscriptions that Gaumata, The Magian, seized the empire in the month of 'Garmapada' but that after a few months' reign he was slain by him in the month 'baghayadaish' That this interval was eight months we learn from another source-Herodotus. 'Garmapada' (= the path of heat), the hottest month of the year, is held by almost all Oriental Scholars to have coincided with the 5th month 'Ab' of the Babylonians—the same period that in much later times was co-extensive with the 'Thermidor' of the French Republican Calendar. The 8th month after 'Ab' is 'Nisan', with which, therefore, *Baghayadaish* coincides.

The only difference between *Bagha* of the Avesta and *Bau* of the Babylonians is that the former is a male deity and the latter a female. In the Hindu Mythology the same name occurs as *Bagha* which was originally a noun of the faminine gender, but later the apellation was given to a male deity, as we see in the *Rig Veda* VII, 41, 42, where mention is made of "the strong Bhaga, the son of Aditi, *who disposes all things.*"

Shamas or Utu—The Sun.

Solar worship cannot be said to have originated with any particular nation,—it is common to all; but there is scope for comparison in some of the attributes given to the solar deity that are not apparent or universal but are restricted to a few nations.

The favourits title of Shamas in the hymns is that of "Judge". In one of the hymns addressed to him, he is called, "the Judge of the world, the director of its laws" and also the "warrior hero." With respect to these functions Shamas can be compared to the Avestaic MITHRA, originally the *Companion* of the Sun but in later times (from the Achaemenian dynasty downwards) confounded with the solar god himself. Mithra is commonly called *Davar* or the "Judge", one of his functions being to Judge the souls of men on the fourth morning after death. In Yasht X Mithra is depicted as a warrior *par excellence.*

Utu, another name of Shamas, is derived from 'atu' = 'to see'[1] In this connection it is interesting to note that one of the titles of Mithra is *'baivare—chashmano'* i.e. 'possesssing ten thousand eyes.' Again the sun himself is called the "eye of Ahuramazda" in Yasna I.

Some of the other attributes of Shamas are as under, summarised from Professor Jastrow's book[2]:—

Shamas is the god that gives light and life to all things; upon his favour the prosperity of the fields and the well-being of men depend. His fovour produces order and stability; his wrath brings discomfiture and ruin to the state and the individual. He receives the supplications of men, loosens the bonds of the imprisoned, grants health to the sick, and even revivifies the dead. He puts an end to wickedness, and destroys enemies. He makes the weak strong and prevents the strong from crushing the weak. He cleanses men by taking out whatever is evil within them.

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1. Jastrow—op. cit., p. 73.
2. *Ibid* pp. 71, 300 and 301.

All the above attributes are also met with in Mithra, as can be seen from Yasht X. Mithra is the Lord of wide pastures, he has boons to give at his will, and the tiller of the ground he guards against oppression. (Yt. X. 60). He is foe of the liar and of the unrighteous. He is the all seeing and the undeceivable, the preserver of oaths and good faith. "To him, with whom Mithra has been satisfied, he comes with help, and of him, with whom Mithra has been offended, he crushes down the house, the borough, the town, the province, the country." (Yt. X. 87). "He takes out of distress the man who has not lied unto him, nay, he takes him out of death." (Yt. X. 22). "He is a keeper and protector of the dwellings of those who lie not." (Yt. X. 80). "Him the poor man who follows the good law, when wronged and deprived of his rights, invokes for help, with hands uplifted" (Yt. X. 84). "He listens to appeals and in him is placed the decision for the good law." (Yt. X. 61, 64). "He is the right lord and master of the world, and the best cleanser of the creatures (of the world), and he is the giver of health." (Yt. X 5, 92).

An additional point of comparison between the Babylonian and the Iranian god will be noticed in the sections treating of Ramman.

Nannar or Sin.—The Moon-god.

The worship of the functions and attributes of the lunar god that are peculiar to Babylonia and Iran are worth noting.

In an inscription of Ur-Bau (c. 2800 B. C.) the moon is called 'Go-chithra' i.e. 'Keeper of the seed of the Bull.'

In a hymn to Nannar,[1] we find the moon god addressing as the Lord ef increase, granting water, establishing dwellings, and granting gifts; one at whose command nourishment streams forth, vegetation sprouts forth, and life is increased. The moon god of the Iranians possesses similar attributes. In Yasht VII, he is called prosperity-giving, water-giving, weal-giving, the healing, and the one that causes the plants to grow.

Nin-Shakh[2] and **Nin-ib.-Ninshakh** (i.e. the lord of the Wild Boar), was the Babylonian god of war. His name is suggestive of the fierceness and courage of which the animal is the type. As a warrior he was at times identified with Nin-ib, the Assyrian God of Battle and Victory, who was worshipped under the form of a winged bull. The characteristics of these gods meet in the Iranian Yazata VERETHRAGHNA whose name signifies 'victorious; smiter of the

1. Jastrow, op. cit., pp. 308, 304.

2. This is a provisional reading, as the name is written in ideograms.

enemy.' In Yasht X. 70, we see that when Mithra goes to battle, in front of him marchos Verethraghna in the form of a boar wrathful, strong bodied, and sharp-tusked. From Yasht XIV. it appears that Verethraghna, when invoked by men in battle, goes to their assistance in various forms among which are the forms of a boar and that of a bull.

The worship of Ninshakh must have been older than B. C. 2300, for about that time was repaired an old temple of this deity by Rimsin of Larsap.

Lugal-Erima-'Lugal' means 'King,' but the meaning of 'Erima' has not been definitely ascertained. Very little is known about the god whose name appears in the inscriptions of Ur-Bau (c. 2800 B. C.) Erima seems to be an abbreviation of AIRYA MAN of the Avesta.

Ishtar.—This was the most renowned and widely worshipped of the Babylonian goddesses, and her worship dated from very remote times. Gradually many other goddesses, originally distinct, were amalgamated with her. Later she was worshipped also as the planet Venus. Her chief attribute was that of the Goddess of Beauty and of Love. She was denominated 'the brilliant goddess,' 'the mother of countries' and 'the mistress of mountains.' She was invoked by marriageable girls for granting them suitable husbands, and by men for the gifts of domestic prosperity. In course of time her cult became tainted with gross immorality.

The word 'Ishtar' is neither Semitic nor Turanian, and Assyriologists are not agreed as to its roots. Says Professor Sayce,[1] "Babylonians of the historical age do not seem to have known what was its origin, and it is therefore quite useless for us to speculate on the subject. Its true etymology is buried in the night of antiquity."

Professor Jastrow is of opinion that the word is Semitic, and suggests a tentative meaning.—'The goddess that brings blessing (to mankind).[2]

But if the word is Semitic, it is very strange that it does not bear the feminine suffix t, as we see in the names of other goddesses. Belit, Anat, Sarpanit &c. The to suffix was added afterwards "when the name travelled further to the West, away from its old associations with Chaldea..... and Ishtar was transformed into Ashtoreth and Astarte."[3]

1. Sayce –Hibbert Lecture p. 260.
2. Professor Jastrow—Religion of Babylonia p. 12, foot note.
3. Jastrow, op. cit., p. 686, foot note.

The Avesta language, however, supplies a key to the problem that has so puzzled the scholars. The root of the word as well as the abovementioned functions of the goddess Ishtar are to be seen in the Avesta word "Ashi-(-blessing) and in the Iranian female yazata of that name 'Ishtar' is probably a transformation of 'Ashi-srira,' 'the beautiful Ashi,' although her usual title is Ashi-Vanghuhi,' 'the good Ashi.' She is the goddess ot Fortune and Wealth, and in Yasht XVII. she is described as the defender of matrimony, and foe of those who keep a maiden by force from marriage. She is beautiful and radiant, and to maidens she grants the beauty with which they please their husbands.

According to Jensen, Ishtar corresponds with the Ellamitic deity Vashti.[1]

Vashti is also an Iranian name. From the 'Book of Esther' (which is the Hebrew form of 'Ishtar,') we see that Vashti is the name of the Queen of Ahasuerus, the Persian King. In the Avesta language '*Vashti*' means 'desired'. In Yasht XVII., 15, *Vashatha Khshayamna* (i.e. 'sovereign at will') is the appellation of Ashi.

In the Babylonian inscriptions from the time of Hammurabi downward, and in the Assyrian, Ishtar also figures as the Goddess of Battle and War. In Ashi too, this trait, is to be met with, for she is described as "Strong, provided with many warriors bold."[2]

There is mention of Ishtar in the inscriptions of a very ancient king—Sargon of Agade (B. C. 3800), and no doubt her worship was older still.

Dumuzi.—Subsequently better known as *Tammuz.* 'Dumu-zi' means 'the Child of life.' He was a solar deity and at the same time a patron of agriculture and a god of the nether world. There was an annual mourning for him in Babylon, in the fourth month *Tammuz* which was sacred to him.

A corresponding Iranian deity is the Yazata 'Dahm' or 'DAMI-UPAMANA' which word can be translated "The symbol of creation".[2] In Yasht X, 9, 66, and in Yasht XIII, 47, he is mentioned as the Companion of Mithra, which explains the solar aspect of the Babylonian god. His connection with the world of the Dead can be seen from Yashts X. 66, XIII., 47, Yasna LXXI, 23, and the Sirozah, where he is invoked along with the *Fravashis* (*manes*) of the Good.

1. Yasht XVII, I.

2. Some scholars translate –"The cursing thought of the wise," but the above meaning is the better one.

A further mention of Tammuz will be made in the section treating of the festivals.

Nergal. This god, in his main characteristics resembles SRAOSHA of the the Avesta. It is true there is no similarity in the pronounciation of the two names, but then it should be borne in mind that 'Nergal' is written ideographically, and it is possible that another way of pronouncing the name may be hit upon hereafter, which would be more akin to the Avesta name.

With Nergal has been identified a god 'Lugal-Banda.' The latter is another name of Nergal, as can be seen from the fact that while in the inscriptions of Sin-gashid of the dynasty of Uruk, mention is made of Lugal-Banda in the list of the gods worshipped by him, we find that another king of the same dynasty, Sin-gamil places the name of Nergal exactly where his predecessor mentions Lugal-Banda.[1]

The meanings of the two names are also nearly identical.

Lugal-Banda = Strong King.
Ner-gal = Great Lord.

The ideogram Lugal(= King) can also be read as *'sarru'* which in the Babylonian Semitic language has the same meaning; and the ideogram 'banda' can also be read as *'us'* which in the Babylonian Akkadian language means 'great, powerful.' So the phonetic epuivalent of the two ideograms is *'Sarru-us'* which comes very near to the Avesta word Sraosha. It is true that in the reading suggested here both Semitic and Akkadian languages are made use of, but as, after the settlement of the Semites in Babylonia the language for ordinary use was Semitic with a fairly good sprinkling of Akkadian words, such a combination is rendered possible.

Even if the suggested reading stand not the test of philology, the identification that is sought to be established between Nergal and Sraosha will not be affected thereby, as it is based not merely on phonetic equivalents of names but on the close resemblance between the functions of the gods, as will be presently shown.

Nergal was the ruler of the nether world and had command over all demons and evil spirits. He was also a god of war, and as such, and in connection with his destructive powers, he was frequently described as 'the god of fire', 'the raging king', 'the violent one,' 'the one who burns'. One of the most common ideographs used to express his name was that signifying the 'sword'.[2] His typical bird was the

1. Jastrow *op. cit.*, p, 95.
2. Jastrow—*op. cit.*, pp. 183 and 67.

Cock, the bird of dawn, at whose warning crow the evil spirits were supposed to vanish.[1] Nergal and Nin-ib were invoked by the Assyrians for success on the battlefield and on the hunting-ground. Both of them were also sculptured on Assyrian palaces, the former in his symbolic form of the winged Lion and the latter in that of the winged Bull, and they were supposed to keep guard over the king.

Just as Nergal is the ruler of the lower world, Sraosha is the guardian of the souls of the dead. For three days and three nights he watches over and protects the soul that has just quitted its earthly tenement. Then he hands over his charge to Verethraghna (compared above with Nin-ib) who conducts it to the *Chinvat* bridge.[2] Sraosha and Verethraghna are also associated with each other in another way along with Fire they are the co-operators of *Asha-vahishta*, the Amesh-aspenta of Heat. This accounts for the epithets given to Nergal—'the burning one' and 'the god of fire'.

Sraosha is pre-eminently the smiter of the *Daevas* and the Demons; He bows not for fear and fight before the Daevas : before him all the Daevas bow for fear and fright reluctantly, and rush away to darkness."[3]

Sraosha is also a god of battle. He is called "the strong armed warrior," and he is invoked for strength to subdue tormentors and to destroy foes.[4] He is very frequently called 'Darshidraosh' i.e. the mighty-weaponed. That his favourite weapon is the *Sword*, as in the case of Nergal, appears from the following description of it :— 'The uplifted weapon,' 'the broad weapon,' 'the sharp and cutting weapon forcefully smiting on the head.'[5] The cock is the typical bird of Sraosha[6] as it is of Nergal.

The above points of comparison sufficiently show that Nergal is Sraosha; but the worship of the former seems to have gradually deteriorated, and the god from being originally a guardian of the souls seems to have been transformed into a ruler of the nether world and even into a god of pestilence.

Mention is made of a temple of Nergal in the inscriptions of Dungi (c. 2900 B. C.), and therefore the worship of the god dates from an earlier period still.

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1. Gerald Massey—*A Book of the Beginnings*. Vol. II, P. 469.
2. *Mino-Kherad*, II, 115.
3. *Yasht* XI, 13.
4. *Yasna* LVI 33, 26.
5. *Yt.* XI 11 and *Yasna* LVI, 10, 31.
6. *Vendidad* XVIII, 23.

Adar.—Whether this is the correct pronunciation of the name of the god seems to have been a matter of doubt with some scholars, for the word cannot be traced to either Turanian or Semitic sources. The name appears as 'Nin-dara' in the inscriptions of Gudea and Ur-Bau (c. 3000 B. C.). The god was held in estimation as the son and messenger of Bel (one of the principal deities of the Babylonians), and as the warrior and champion of the gods. He was also identified with the Meridian Sun.

Adar is the same name as the Iranian ATAR or Adar, the angel presiding over Fire. Adar is the son of Ahuramazda, and a co-operator of the Ameshaspenta Ashavahishta, who presides over the time of Midday.

Gish-zida.—This name appears in the list of Gudea (c. 3000 B.C.) and is similar to the Iranian GEUSH-URVAN, 'The Soul of the Bull,' one of the *Yazatas*. The word 'zida', in the Babylonian language, means 'life'; the first word *Gish* seems to be a contraction of the Iranian *Geush*. There are no further points of resemblance between the two gods beyond this.

Ishum,—A god of the nether regions. He was a very malignant being, and was an attendant of the plague god Dibarra. The corresponding Avesta name, from which the above seems to have been derived is 'AESHMA'—the name of the Demon of wrath.

We now proceed to the second classification of the Babylonian gods and take in hand those of them that appear in the historical inscriptions for the first time, from the time of Hammurabi, i.e., from about 2300 B.C. Among these the most prominent was :—

Marduk, the son of Hea. The principal seat of his worship was Babylon and among the gods worshipped there he held the fore-most place, second perhaps to that of his father alone.

The old great god Bel was now forgotten and his individuallity into that of the new god, who was consequently addressed as Bel Marduk.

From the hymns and the magical texts we see that Marduk was regarded as the Mediator between Hea and Mankind. The man smitten with disease or otherwise in trouble appealed for help to Marduk, who promptly brought the petition to his father Hea. The latter gave Marduk the necessary instructions, which in turn were conveyed to the person crying for divine succour.[1]

1 Jastrow-op. cit., p 139.

Marduk was also the bestower of blessings, and in connection with this function he was named 'Silik-mulu-khi' which means he who distributes good amongst men'[1].

In one of the hymns he is also addressed as "the merciful lord who loves to raise the dead to life"[2].

Some scholars are of opinion that he was a solar-deity originally, though his qualities as such are not mentioned in any of the inscriptions.

The etymology of the name 'Marduk' has not been hitherto satisfactorily traced. But a reference to the Avesta solves the difficulty. 'Marduk' is the same as the Avesta AMERETAT of which a later form is Ameridad and modern Persian Murdad. The change of the final 'd' or 't' into 'k' is well known to all philologists. For instance the Avesta word 'Spenta-Mainu' becomes 'Spinak-mino' in Pahlavi.

Other pronunctions of 'Marduk,' as given by Lenormant[3], are 'Amrud' and 'Amarutuki' both of which are directly derivable from Ameretat.

Ameretat, in the Avesta language, means "Immortality," which is the origin of Marduk's function as the restorer of the dead to life. Again in Yasht II and in the Sirozah we see that this Ameshâspenta presides over the prosperity of the herds and over the increase of cattle, which accounts for Marduk's role as a bestower of blessings.

Haurvatat (who has been identified above with Hea) and Ameretat are twin Ameshâspentas in the Avesta; they are always named together, and form an inseparable couple. So in the Babylonian phase of worship we see the relationship of father and son between Hea and Marduk.

Marduk's identification as a solar deity and his functions as a mediator must have been ideas of a later growth at a time when some of the attributes of 'MITHRA' became blended with those of Marduk.

An additional proof of the identity of Marduk and Ameretat is given further on, in the portion dealing with the months and festivals.

Ramman.—He was the god of storms, of thunder and lightning, of wind and rain, of overflow and inundation, and his 'powerful roar' struck terror into the hearts of men. He was also a constant associate of the Sun-god Shamas, jointly with whom he is frequently mentioned

1 Lenormant-Chalnean Magic, p. 190.

2 Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, p. 136 ; Jastrow-p. 116 f. n.

3 Chaldean Magic · pp. 10 and 32.

in the Babylonian texts. In a hymn of Hammurabi's days it is significant that while each of the other gods mentioned receives a line for himself Ramman is the only one who is tacked on to another deity Shamas[1]. He was one of the chief gods not only of the Babylonians but of the Assyrians, who assigned to him a position next to that of Asshur alone. In Assyria his worship dated from very ancient times, as is evinced by his name appearing as one of the elements in the name of the Assyrian ruler Samsi-Ramman who flourshed about 1850 B C. Another role of Ramman was that of a god of War, and he is addressed as such in an inscription of Nebuchad-nezzar.

Ramman is none but the Avesta RAMAN - the angel presiding over the atmosphere. Just as the Babylonian god is an associate of Shamas, so is Râman the associate of Mithra. The two are frequently mentioned together in the Avesta.

In Yasht XV, dedicated to this yazata, every chapter commences with the words -"*yazûi apemcha baghemcha*"- "I sacrifice to the waters and to the distributors of the same," which explains the role of Ramman as the god of rains and of the overflow. In the same Yasht, (passages 46, 47) the *yazata* calls himself 'the valiant, the strong the strong-for-protection, the freeing-from-troubles, and the roarer.' His characteristics as a war-god appear from passage 51 of the same Yasht. where Râman pormises to come to the aid of those who, wounded in battle, invoke him and pray to him for strength.

Sarpanitum —She was the goddess of matrimonial fertility, and was also indentified with an older Akkadian divinity 'Gasmu' (= 'the wise one')[2]. The name seems to have been a transformation of the Avssta SPENTA-ARMAITI,' the female Ameshâspenta presiding over the earth. 'Spenta' means 'bountifnl,' and 'Armaiti' both in Avesta and Sanskrit, means 'wisdom'. That the Babylonian goddess is identical with the Iranian will be seen further on in the portion dealing with the festivals. Her role as a goddess of matrimonial fertility must have been a secondary one, a development of her original character of the goddess of agricultural prosperity - the bountiful Mother Earth.

Nabu:— A very popular god with the Babylonians as well as the Assyrians. He was the god of wisdom and intelligence, and of the art of writing from which cause he was frequently invoked by the scribes. Professor Sayce and other scholars are of opinion that he

1 Jastrow - *op. cit.*, p 157.

2. Sayce -*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 111,

was originally a water-deity. In religious and historical texts he is lauded as the deity who opens up the subterranean sources in order to irrigate the fields. He was also regarded as the patron of agriculture and the one who caused corn to sprout forth. Some of his other epithets were 'the upholder of the world' 'the general overseer,' 'the proclaimer,' and 'the herald of the gods.' In his last mentioned character he was often amalgamated with a fire-god 'Nusku' The sceptre and the stylus were his emblems.

The corresponding Avesta deity is *Apâm-napât.* "The navel of the waters. The second half of this name, contracted, becomes 'Nabu'.

According to Yasht VIII, 34, Apâm-napât spreads over the corporeal world the waters which are to be distributed to the fields.[1]

In Yast XIX, 52, we see him described as the god who "helps one at his appeal," "whose ear is the quickest to hear when he is worshipped," and the god "who made man, who shaped man"—epithets which are very similar to those of Nabu as the General Overseer and upholder of the World.

Dr. Geiger believes that the Iranian Deity represents the Lightning which dwells in the clouds. This Aspect of Apâm-Napât might explain why Nabu was called a proclaimer, for Lightning is a proclaimer of the rainstorm.

Apâm-Napât is frequently invoked with the fire-yazata '*Nairyo-Sangha*' and there is an intimate connection between them, just as there is between Nabu and Nusku.

Nusku.—A fire-god, who though appearing in the historical inscriptions from the time of the Assyrian rule only, was well known in the time of Hammurabi, as can be seen from the religious texts. The Babylonians regarded him as the messenger of their principal deity Bel-Marduk, but in the Assyrian period his function had developed into that of a messenger of the gods in general. He was, on the one hand, amalgamated with 'Gibil' the Firegod, and on the other identified with Nabu. The compound ideograms in which his name is written include the same sign—the stylus or sceptre—that is used to designate Nabu.[2] It seems Gibil and Nusku were originally worshipped as fire-gods in different places, and were amalgamated as the Babylonian empire grew in extent.

1. The word for 'fields' is *Shoithra*' which can also be translated 'Countries' or 'Cities.'

2. Jastrow—*Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* P. 226.

In an Assyrian inscription of Asshur-ban-pal, Nusku is described as 'the one who glorifies sovereignty.'

Nusku is an abridged and corrupted form of the Avesta 'NAIR-YO-SANGHA,' the name of the Messenger of Ahura-Mazda. The Iranian deity is described in the Atash Niyâyesh as 'the one who dwells in the Navel of Kings,' which tallies with the Assyrian monarch's description of Nusku.

In Yasna LXXI and in other passages we find him frequently associated with Apâm-napât, (as we see in the case of Nabu and Nusku.) This is easily accounted for on the supposition that Apâm-Napât though a water deity is also, in his character of Lightning, a Fire-god.

The presence of Nusku was indispensable in the temples, when sacrificial gifts were offered to the gods, or any religious ceremony performed. The idea underlying this was the belief that the sacrifice consumed by the fire was conveyed to the gods in the form of the ascending smoke. Hence the fire-god becomes the messenger between the gods and men. The same idea is traceable in the functions of Nairyo-Sangha of the Iranians and Agni of the Hindus.

The Sceptre as the symbol of both Nabu and Nusku has also its origin in the Iranian Myths. The Sceptre is the materialised form of the '*Khareno*' or 'Glory' so frequently described in the Avesta.

In Yasht XIX there is mention of the '*Akharetem Khareno*' or the 'Imperishable Glory' belonging to the pious, for obtaining possession of which there is a struggle between the forces of the Good Spirit and the Evil Spirit, whereupon the Glory swells up and rushes into the sea Vouru-Kasha. Here it is at once seized by Apâm Napât, who is therefore the possessor and preserver of the Imperishable Glory, symbolised by the Sceptre of Nabu.

Another kind of Glory, called the *Kavaem Khareno* or the 'Kingly Glory' is preserved by the Angel of Fire, as appears from the frequent allusions to it in the Atash Niyaesh. Nusku, the Babylonian Fire-God, is therefore represented with a sceptre.

We now come to the gods peculiar to the Assyrian pantheon. Amongst these the foremost place is held by

Asshur.— He was the supreme god of the Assyrians, and not only were his statues placed in the temples, but his form was also represent-

ed on the military standard to ensure his presence with the army whereever it went. The standard consisted of a pole surrounded by a disc enclosed within two wings, while above the disc stood the figure of a warrior in the act of shooting an arrow. This emblem of Asshur was represented in Assyrian sculptures, on the palace-walls, porticos, and prominent places; and with some slight modifications, it seems to have been copied in the Achemenian sculptures.[1]

Regarding the root of the word 'Asshur', Professor Sayce observes as follows :—"The name of Asshur is frequently represented by a character which among other ideographic values had that of 'good'. The name was accordingly explained by the Assyrians of the later historical age as 'the good god', with a reference perhaps to their own words '*asiru* = righteous' and '*asirtu* = righteousness'".[2]

I believe, however, that the derivation of Asshur too should be sought for in the Avesta language. The Semitic words '*asiru*' and '*asirtu*' have in them the Avesta root *Asha*, righteousness.

Either Asshur might be another form of the Avesta AHURA, the supreme Zoroastrian God, (whose name appears, in the Rig Veda as *Asura*) or perhaps Asshur has two component parts, ASHA (i.e. righteousness—The name of the third Ameshâspenta), and AHURA, which combination we see in the name 'Ashâurâ' occurring in Yasht XIII, 113.

Assara Mazas :—This name occurs in a list of Assyrian gods. According to Professor Hommel, as quoted in the Hon. Emmeline Plunkett's *Ancient Calendars and Constellations*, this is the Iranian *Ahura-Mazda* borrowed by the Assyrians in the Kassitic period, between 1200 and 700 B.C.

Sharru-ilu and **Sherua**.—Assyriologists are of opinion that both are foreign gods. Very little information about them is to be obtain-

1. By the Iranians the Emblem was held to be a representation of the *Fravashi* or guardian spirit dwelling jointly with the soul in the human body. It may be that the Emblem *was originally Iranian*, and subsequently imported into Assyria, whence it returned to the land of its birth under the Achaemenian rule. The idea of representing *Fravashis* with wings was a very old one, very much older than the Achaemenian period, as can be seen from a passage in the Farvardin Yasht—(Yasht XIII, 70).

"The awful *Fravashis* of the faithful come flying unto him for succour; it seems as if they were well-winged birds."

The Author of *Ancient Calendars and Constellations* regards the Iranian emblem as the older one. She says, "To the Medes I would attribute the first imagining of the astronomical emblem common to Ahura and Assur, that of the Divine Being presiding over the circle of the Ecliptic." *op. cit.*, p. 83.

2. *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 124

ed from the inscriptions. The first name has been interpreted as 'the king-god', and it appears in the inscriptions of the Assyrian King Sargon (c. 722 B.C.); the second appears in the inscriptions of Sennacherib. (c. 700 B. C.). I believe both are variants of the same Avesta KHSHATARA-VAIRYA' or '*Sheriver*'—that of one of the Ameshâspentas. 'Khshathra', in Avesta, means 'King'.

Another foreign god appearing in the Assyrian inscription is:—

Mishiru.—Of whom also very little is known. The name is a slightly altered form of the Avesta MITHRA. Gerald Massey, in his "*Book of the Beginnings*," translates 'Misari' as the god Mithra.

Quitting the Babylonian Pantheon let us now turn our eyes to the festivals and sacred months of that nation, and examine what further evidence they furnish about the relationship between babylonia and Iran in very ancient times.

We have seen above that the Babylonian month Sivan corresponded to the Iranian month Aspendâd, and that the Babylonian goddess identical with the same Ameshâspenta 'Aspendâd' or 'Spentâ Armaiti' was Sarpanitum goddess of fertility. A festival of this goddess used to be held on the 25th of Sivan.

In the Iranian month, wherein thirty days have all different names and are consecrated to differnt yazatas, the 25th day according to the Calendar given in the Avesta literature and now in vogue, is dedicated to Ashisvangha, who has nothing in common with Spentâ-Armaiti, the female Ameshâspenta presiding over the earth, But a closer examination reveals some interesting facts. It has been held by all Avesta Scholars that *Dae-pa-âdar*, *Dea-pa-mihr* and *Dae-pa-din* the 8th, the 15th and the 23rd days in all months, seem to have been of later introduction into the Calender, (when a sort of hebdomadal division was deemed necessary), for in the three names the first part common to all is a name of the Creator and the last part is a repetition of the 9th, 16th and 24th days of the month. The inference that can be drawn from this is two-fold:

(1) That the names above mentioned replaced other names standing in exactly the same places, and thus the position of the other day of the month was not disturbed. Or

(2) That names discarded were those of last three days of the month,- the 28th, the 29th and the 30th - and by the insertion of last

three days of the new names at the intervals 7, 7, and 8 days, the position of the days from the 9th to the 30th was slightly shifted. Thus Adar from being the 8th became the 9th, Mihr from the 14th became the 16th, Din from the 21st became the 24th, and so on upto Anerân, previously the 27th now the 30th day.

That the latter inference, and not the former is the correct one, will be presently shown.

According to the second theory the day 'Zamiad,' which is at present the 28th day of the month, was originally, in very ancient times, the 25th day. And so it is but natural to expect that the day consecrated to the yazata of the Earth, in the month consecrated to the Ameshâspenta of the Earth, should have been held as a festival, (as appears from the Babylonian festival on the 25th of Sivan,) although it is true that no such Iranian festival has been preserved down to our days, among the Zoroastrians.

The above theory receives further corroboration from a Babylonian festival in the month of Tammuz. It has been shown above that this month corresponded to the month Farvardin of the Iranians. It is not known on what particular day of the month the Babylonian festival was held, but from the Jewish Calendar, (which was borrowed from the Babylonians and has been in use since the Captivity), it appears that the 17th of Tammuz was held as a fast. Now if we take off, as explained above, the days Dae-p-Adar and Dae-pa-Mihr from the Iranian months, the 17th day is Farvardin - of the same name as the month - a festival day of the Zoroastrians.

The Babylonian ordinary year was one of 360 days and this was brought into harmony with the solar year by intercalations of various kinds, one of which was the insertion of an intercalary month every six years. This month was named Elu[1] which, as we have seen above, corresponded to the Iranian month Khordad. Whether the Iranian mode of intericalation in very remote ages was similar or not has not been definitely ascertained; the traces hitherto discovered of the oldest Iranian year point to a year of 365 days and not 360. But that the Ameshâspenta Khordad or Haurvatat had somthing to do with intercalation is apparent from the fact that in the Avesta wherever there is a mention of this Ameshâspenta there is at the same time, an invocation addressed to the Seasons and to the year, "The Ameshas-

1. In the Assyrian year which was a luni-solar one, the month intercalated was second Adar

penta Haurvatât praise we. The prosperity of the Seasons[1] praise we. The years, the pure, lords of purity praise we."

We have seen above that the Babylonian month Marcheshwan is the same as Iranian month Ameretat, and that the Ameshàspenta after whom the Iranian month is named is identical with the Babylonian god Marduk. This receives confirmation from the fact that although Marduk had the foremost place in the Babylonian pantheon the month sacred to him was not the first month Nisad, but the eighth month Marcheshwan.

We shall next deal with other points of similarity between the Babylonian and the Iranian belief, such as those concerning the myths and legends, the hymns and the sacrificial rites, demonology and incantations. After a brief survey of the evidence furnished by these, as well as by certain Geographical names and words common to both languages, we shall try to ascertain which of the nations has borrowed from the other, and when and in what respect has such borrowing taken place.

In the Cosmological myth of the Babylonians we see that before the creation of the Universe two things were in existence.

Tiamat, the goddess of Chaos, and Apsu, the primordial Ocean. In Tiamat is noticeable the Avesta root *temâo* = darkness, and in Apsu the Avesta root *ap* = water.

In the Babylonian account of the Deluge, the only man who, along with his family, escapes from the universal calamity, and from whose progeny the world is repopulated, is named Khasis-adra, (Pronounced *Xi-suthros* by the Greeks). The name is the same as the Avesta *Ukhshyat-ereta* or Hoshedar, the future Saviour of mankind according to the Iranian belief. 'Khasis-adra' means 'very pious;'[2] and 'Ukhshyat-ereta' means 'growing piety', according to Dr. Geiger.

The Babylonian account of the Deluge differs totally in other respects from the account given in the Vendidad, of the snow-storm which took place in the time of Jamshed. But in the former the god who causes the deluge is Ramman, a deity whose appearance in the Babylonian pantheon dates from about B. C. 2300, or shortly after the rule of the Zoroastrians in Babylonian.

The Babylonians believed that each man had his own patron god and goddess who made his welfare their peculiar charge, and to whose service he was specially devoted. In any trouble or affliction he would first turn to these two deities and implore them to exert their influence

1. Instead of 'Prosperity of the Seasons', some translate. 'The yearly good dewlling.'
2. Jastrow—*op. cit.*. p. 505, foot note.

in his behalf.[1] These guardian deities resemble the *Fravashis* worshipped by the Iranians.

Among the Demons whom the Babylonians feared the most may be mentioned the Ekimmu and the Ashakku. The Ekimmu was the wandering shade of a man who had not received proper burial, and he was held to be very malicious, bewitching all whom he met with, and causing them grievous sickness. In the Avesta is mentioned a wicked demon *Akamanangh*, the root underlying which, *viz.*, "*Aka* = wicked, evil," is probably the root of Ekimmu also.

Ashakku was the demon of wasting diseases. According to Professor Sayce[2] the word is the Akkadian 'a-sig' = 'strength destroying.' But the word seems evidently to be of Aryan origin. In Sanskrit 'Ashakti' means want of strength, weakness and in the Avesta '*yaska*' is 'illness, weakness.'

In order to keep away the demons and prevent their entering the houses the Babylonians used to hang up in the house, probably at the entrance, tablets inscribed with extracts from the religious texts. A similar custom which has survived among the Zoroastrians is that of writing in Pehlavi characters on a piece of paper a religious formula and pasting such paper on the door, on the 5th day of the month Aspendad, in order to secure the dwelling against the inroad of demons and of noxious animals.

The Babylonian priests were divided into many classes according to the special functions assigned to them. Some had to attend to the sacrifices, some consulted the oracles, there were those whose function was to exorcise the evil spirits, and again others who had to keep watch in the temple at night. The time that was deemed most suitable by the exorcists for the exercise of their functions - for breaking the spell of the demons and driving them away - was night time, and the gods of night were specially invoked for the occasion.

The Iranians too had their priests divided into several classes. There were the *Zaotas* who performed religious ceremonies, the *Frabaretars* who arranged the materials used in the sacrifice, the *Athravans* who tended the Fire, the *Sraosharvarezas* who weapon in hand were supposed to scare away the evil spirits from the sacrifice, and others. Moreover, the ceremonies for exorcising the demons and controlling their evil influences were performed at night time, as can be gathered from the 'Aivisruthrem Gah' prayer, wherein the time of night is referred to as set apart for the functions of the high priest - the

1. L. W. King—*Babylonian Religion and Mythology* p. 209. Also see Lenormant—*Chaldean Magic*, pp. 199-201.
2. *Hibbert Lectures*—p. 455.

"Zarthushtrotemo." The Vendidad, (properly *vi-daevo-data* i.e., the chants given for use against the Daevas) was, and is still, recited at night time i.e., from midnight to morning.

Among the Babylonians, as well as among the Iranians, and several other Aryan nations, the privilege of exercising the priestly functions was reserved for certain families, and any physical blemish was regarded as a disqualification for the calling.

In order to charm away diseases the Babylonians in their incantations, invoked by name certain medicinal herbs and weeds. A similar invocation occurs in the Vendidad (XX, 3 to 6).

Another Babylonian mode of curing a patient was to recite incantations in which the diseases were one by one named and cursed, and were commanded to leave the body. The primitive Iranian mode of healing was similar as evidenced in Yasht III. and Vendidad XX. (7 to 10).

In the Babylonian religious ceremonies a water basin called 'Apsu' was indispensable. So has it been in the Yasna and Vendidad, recitals of the Zoroastrians. Another sacred object in the Babylonian ceremonies was the ship, shaped like a crescent, for carrying the gods. A similar object used by the Zoroastrians is called the '*Mah ru*' or 'moon-shape,' which is used as a support for the *baresma* rods.

Other objects used in the Babylonian religious ceremonies were-green branches of trees, pure water, fire, grains of corn, wine, scented wood, herbs, saffron, flesh of a white lamb and so forth.[1] The Zoroastrians use fire, water, wine, milk, scented wood, leaves of the pomegranate, the *baresma* or twigs of the tamarisk, the consecrated bread, and meat. The date palm which is a *sin qua non* in every Zoroastrian temple, was held sacred in Babylonia also, and was there frequently represented on seal cylinders and monuments, with human forms in adoration before it.

The Babylonian festivals were called '*Isinnu*,' a word which seems to be derived from the Avesta YASNA, i.e., a sacrifice; (Modern Persian, *Jashna* = a festival).

Some of the Babylonian legends are similar to those that we meet with in the *Shahnamah*, the Persian Epic, but as we see no traces of them in the Avesta it is possible that the ideas may have been borrowed by the Iranians from the other nation at a later period.

Sargon of Agada who flourished about 3800 B.C., says in one of his inscriptions that after his birth he was abandoned by his mother

1. Sayce—*Hibbert Lectures* p. 539.

who set him floating on the Euphrates, in a basket; that he was rescued by Akki, the gardener, who brought him up as his own son, and that later, by the favour of the goddess Ishtar he came to be a king.[1]

According to the *Shahnamah*, the king Darab shortly after his birth, was similarly left to his fate in a basket set floating on the Euphrates, and he was picked up by a washerman who brought him up.

A Babylonian hero Etna had friendship with an Eagle. At one time when the wife of Etana had difficulty in child-birth, the Eagle procured for her the 'Plant of Birth' which ensured safe delivery.[2]

A similar story is told, in the *Shahnamah*, of Rustom's father, Zal, who had friendship with the *Simurgh* (the griffin). The mother of Rustom had great difficulty in giving birth, and was in a critical condition, whereupon Zal sent for the Simurgh, and it was due to the bird's valuable advice that the mother was safely delivered.

The Babylonian legend also informs us that on another occasion the Eagle carried Etana upto Heaven, and that after they had passed several gates of Heaven they fell down. The part of the tablet narrating the accident which befell them is broken, but it appears from another tablet that both of them escaped with their lives.

A some what similar account in the *Shahnamah* is that of Kaikaus, who had an ambition to scale the heavens. To gratify this whim he had a light throne constructed which he placed on the back of four eagles and took his seat thereon. The eagles bore him aloft, but after awhile they fell down *en masse* in a desolute place whence Kaikaus was picked up alive by his attendants.

We now proceed to examine the evidence furnished by certain Babylonian words and Geographical names.

We have already seen that some of the Babylonian words are similar to or have their origin in the Avesta language. A few more words are given here for comparison.[3]

It must however be borne in mind that the words have undergone certain transformations according to the rules of Philology. Thus the sound of 'r' in Avesta becomes 'l' in Babylonian, and similarly '*ch*' becomes 'g', 'h' becomes '*kh*' and so forth.

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1. L. W. King—*Babylonian Religion and Mythology* p. 198.
2. *Ibid*—pp. 184-185.
3. Most of the Babylonian words have been taken from Gerald Massey's A Book of The Beginnings Vol. II.

Babylonian (Semitic).	Avesta.
Kiti - Earth.	*Gaetha* - World.
Bar - Child.	*Puthra* (*Persian Pur*) - Son.
Khamma - Heat.	*Hama* - Summer.
Sisu - Six.	*Khshwas* (Persian *Sish*) - Six.
Darati - Long, lasting.	*Daregha* - Long.
Sem - Wheat.	*Ashem* - Flour, corn.
Dahuti - Gifts.	*Daiti* - Bestowing.
Urru - Day.	*Hwar* - Sun, shining.
Zi - Life.	*Ji* - To live.
Sharru - A King.	*Khshathra* - A king. *Sar* - A chief.
Samu - Sky.	*Asmo* - Sky.
Tuhami - Twins.	*Yema* - Twin.
Kar - Walled round, a fortress.	*Vara* - An enclosure.
Ristu - A chief.	*Ratu* - A chief.
Daenu - A Judge.	*Daena* - Religious law, the faculty of discernment.
Asinnu - A priest.	*Isvant* - A priest.

Babylonian (*Akkadian*).	Avesta.
Har *Khar* - A mountain.	*Hara* - A mountain.
Bi - two.	*Bi* - two.
Kar - Food.	*Khar* - To eat.
Dub - Double.	*Dva* - two.
Mukh - Supreme.	*Maz* - Supreme, great.
Euga - To burn.	*Ruch* - To shine.
Abba - Water.	*Ap* - Water.
Patesi - Viceregent, ruler.	*Paiti* - A ruler, lord, master.
Imga - A priest, honourable.[1]	*Magava* - Pious.

Coming to the Babylonian Geography we find that the most ancient and well known towns were Eridu, Ur, Erech, and Lagash. According to Professor Sayce, 'Eridu' is a contracted form of the Akkadian 'Eriduga' = good city. But possibly it is a contraction of the Avesta 'AIRYA-DAKHYU' = The noble country, or, the Aryan country. Erech or Uruk, whose modern name is Warka, is akin to the VEHRKAN mentioned in the Vendidad. Ur (the present Mughir)

1. Max Duncker—Vol. V.

seems to have its origin in the URWA of the Vendidad. Lagash is the phonetic equivalent of RAGHA mentioned in the Vendidad. Another Babylonian city, called Mar or Maru, resembles in name the MOURU (or Marv) of the Vendidad.

The name of the two rivers of Babylonia — The Euphrates and the Tigris — furnish another indication of the source from which these names are derived. According to Professor Jastrow, the Babylonian names of the rivers are 'Purat' (i.e., the 'river' *par excellence*), and Idiklat (i.e., 'swiftness'). But this does not account for the way in which the Greeks pronounced these names, nor for the prefix *Eu* in 'Euphrates'. To me the names appear to be of Iranian origin. '*Euphrates*' is the same word as the Avestaic 'APA-FRAD' = 'prosperity--giving waters,' (*apa* = water, and *frad* - prosperity-giving), while the word '*Tigris*' is identical with the Avestaic 'TIGHRI' = 'an arrow', the river being so named from the rapidity of its flow.

We know that when new colonies are established by any nation the names of the towns, mountains, rivers, &c., in the new country are often named after those in the mother-country, as we see in the case of many Australian and American places. A similar cause led to the naming of the Babylonian places after those in Iran, for, as is shown hereafter there is a great probability that the earliest known settlers in Babylonia - the Akkadians - came there from Iran.

With regard to the similarity shown above in certain points of the ritual, the sacrificial appurtenances, the worship of the guardian deities, the demonology and incantations, and the legendary lore of the two nations, the data that we have are not yet sufficient to enable us to adjudge the claim of priority. But when we come to the worship of the celestial beings or gods we tread on firmer ground, and from the philological and other evidence to hand we are in a position to decide which nation has borrowed from the other.

Similarity of belief among two nations does not necessarily mean imitation on the part of either. Psychology teaches us that certain religious ideas spring up spontaneously in nations far removed from each other in points of time and space, and such is specially the case in the worship of the powers of nature. But even in this worship there are certain ideas that are not capable of producing the same impression on the human mind - ideas that are not likely to have been independently developed in different nations - and when we come across such, it is worth while pausing to examine whether they are of native growth or a foreign graft. In such and other cases of similarity a right conclusion can be come to if based on the following principles :—

(1) When the names of the gods worshipped by a nation cannot be traced etymologically to the language of the people, but are derivable from the language of another nation worshipping similar gods and ascribing to them similar attributes, it can safely be inferred that the former nation has borrowed from the latter.

(2) In the case of two nations worshipping gods possessing similar names and attributes, if we find that the names in the one are abbreviations of those used by the other, (as we have seen above in Nabu and Apam-Napat, Nasku and Nairyosangha, Marduk and Ameretat, Hea and Haurvat), the logical inference from it is that the nation using short forms of names has copied from the one in which whole names are found.

(3) If we know that the worship of certain gods was unknown to a nation upto a certain time, and if there is evidence to show that shortly before the introduction of the new worship the nation had come into contact with another nation worshipping the above gods, the only legitimate conclusion that can be come to is that the former nation had learnt the new worship from the latter.

(4) The Science of Religion teaches us that in all religions there is at the beginning a tendency towards a multiplication of gods, each god being assigned a separate function, but in the course of time the gods become amalgamated, as we see in the case of Nusku-Gibil, Nusku-Nabu, Bel-Marduk, &c., of the Babylonians and Ammon-Ra, Osiris-Apis (Serapion), &c., of the Egyptians. If then we find that in a particular nation there are two gods slightly differing from each other in their functions, while in other nation the two have become amalgamated into one god, or there is one god endowed with the attributes of both, the inference is not wrong that the phase of worship in the former nation is the older one. Take for example MITHRA. Mithra, as his name implies, is originally 'day-light;' he is not the Sun, but is distinct from it though in later times both were confounded, and when the Romans adopted the Mithraic cult they meant by Mithra the Sun-god only. Similarly we see in the Babylonian Sun-god Shamas the incorporated functions of Mithra as the *Judge*, and in Marduk the characteristics of Mithra as the *Mediator*.

If these four tests are applied to the points of similarity shown above, it will be seen that some of the prominent features in the worship of most of the gods described above are of Iranian mould, and that the Babylonians afterwards adopted the ideas and gradually developed them on their own lines.

It now remains for us to ascertain when and how this transplantation of Iranian conceptions on Babylonian soil could have taken place. For this purpose it will be necessary to give a list of the Iranian *Yazatas* who served as prototypes for the Babylonian gods, together with the date of the earliest inscriptions in which the corresponding Babylonian gods are mentioned.

In the Assyrian period we come across ASHA-AHURA, MITHRA, and KHSHATHRAVAIRYA.

In the inscriptions of about 2300 B. C. we notice SPENTA-ARMAITI, AMERATAT, APAM-NAPAT, NAIRYOSANGHA, RAMAN and MITHRA (as Shamas the associate of Ramman).

In the inscriptions prior to the above date we find traces of VERETHRAGHNA, DAMI-UPAMANA, MITHRA (as Shamas the Judge), MAH or the Moon-god, and the demon AESHMA.

In the inscriptions older still we recognise HAURVATAT and AIRYAMAN (c. 2800 B. C.), SRAOSHA (c. 2900 B. C.) BAGHA, ADAR, and GEUSH-URVAN (c. 3000 B. C.), and ASHI (c. 3800 B. C.).

From this list we may set aside for the present the gods known in the later or Assyrian period, as they do not much help towards establishing the great antiquity of the Iranian religion, and we may also leave out of consideration the Sun-god and the Moon-god, regarding whose cult the evidence to hand is not quite sufficient to show which nation was the first to assign to them certain peculiar functions. Geush-urvan may also be left out of consideration, as the materials for identifying with this Yazata the Babylonian god Gish-zida are somewhat meagre.

Regarding Spenta-armaiti, Ameretat, Raman, Nairyosangha and Apam-Napat whose counterparts appear in the Babylonian pantheon from about the time of Hammurabi, we have strong testimony in favour of the priority of their worship. In the first place, the Babylonian names of the gods are contractions of the whole names in the Avesta, to which therefore they belong originally; and in the second place the Babylonian gods do not seem to have had any existence until about 2300 B. C., or shortly after the period referred to by Berosus, when Babylonia was ruled by the Medes or the Zoroastrians, who though they disappeared from the page of Babylonian history

for several succeeding centuries, left on the mind of the subject nation the impress of their religious belief.[1]

Before, however, we take the origin of Zoroastrianism so far back into antiquity we have to ascertain whether the Yazatas just named are of post-Zoroastrian or pre-Zoroastrian time. The Iranian deities worshipped prior to the time of Zoroaster were also common to the Vedic-Aryans,[2] and among these we come across Apam-Napat, Armaiti, and Nairyosangha. But Raman and Ameretat are nowhere mentioned in the Vedas and are purely post-Zoroastrian deities. In the Gathas of Zoroaster the word *Ameretat* is frequently used in its abstract sense, and at times, for poetic effect, the idea is personified. The latter use led to the transformation of the abstract idea into a separate entity, or as an Archangel, in later times.

We have then so far, arrived at the conclusion that the age of Zoroaster is prior to B. C. 2300.

In the inscriptions earlier than this period we have seen the names of Bagha, Airyamana, Verethraghna, Adar (or Atar), Dami-upamana, the demon Aeshma, Haurvatat, Sraosha and Ashi. The first four are pre-Zoroastrian deities, as their names occur in the Rig Veda also. About Dami-upamana and Aeshma further research is necessary, and these may therefore be left out; but the last three HAURVATAT, SRAOSHA and ASHI are decidedly post-Zoroastrian. They make their appearance in the Gathas as abstract ideas, occasionally personified, as are noticed in the case of Ameretat, and their transformation into Yazatas is a subsequent development. Since the female Yazata ASHI, as the Babylonian Ishtar, appears in the inscriptions of about 3800 B. C., it may safely be presumed that the Zoroastrian religion and consequently the age of Zoroaster, *are of an earlier date Still.*[3]

In our quest of the age of Zoroaster we have thus arrived at the hoary antiquity of 3800 B. C., but the object of our search lies still

1. "When the Medes (mentioned by Berosus as ruling over Babylonia) had, by Hammurabi or his successors, been driven out of Northern Mesopotamia, they were replaced by Semitic settlers who.....adopted, to a certain extent, the religion of the nation whom they had dispossessed.....Coming into a region where for nearly 2000 years the monotheistic Medes had been established, they, to avert the wrath of the God of the land, adopted to a certain extent his worship." *Ancient Calendars and Constellations*, pp. 84 and 85.

2. The Iranians and the Vedic Aryans seem to have separated at about the time of Zoroaster's mission, for we find Gushtasp and some of his warriors mentioned in the Vedas, and likewise some Vedic personages mentioned in the Gathas.

3. This does not mean that all the Yashts and other prayers are of similar antiquity. What is proved here is the antiquity of the *worship* and not of the *writings*. The oldest scriptures are the *Gathas* only.

further off,—we have still to traverse several centuries ere we can reach the hither-most outposts of that memorable epoch. To form an estimate of the length of this intervening space we shall now have to examine when and how certain religious ideas and forms of speech of the Aryan nation came to be adopted by the Babylonians. The Median rule of the 25th century B. C. accounts, as we have seen, but for a part of the resemblance we have noticed; it throws no light whatsoever on how the gods worshipped previously to that age found their way into the Babylonian pantheon. The explanation of this should be sought in another direction.

The earliest hitherto known people that settled in Babylonia were a nomad tribe speaking a language classified as Turanian or of the agglutinative group. The parts that they settled in were called by them Shumir and Akkad, and hence their language has been differently termed Akkadian or Sumerian by modern Scholars. There is historical evidence to prove that even so early as 4500 B.C. they had a well established form of Government there.[1] Assyriologists concur on the point that these Turanians were not indigenous to the soil ; but came from some other country. "If we examine the elementary characters of their cuneiform writing with a view to discovering what the internal objects were which they originally represented, we find that the nature of the objects thus formed into graphic signs seems to indicate as the original seat of this writing a land other than Chaldea,—a more Northern region with a very different fauna and flora."[2] The Akkadians were well supplied with the names of metals though no metallic ores whatever could at any time have been found in Chaldea.[3] Moreover the Akkadian word used for every kind of camel is one that can be etymologically explained to have been originally intended for a special variety—the two-humped animals of Bactria.[4] From these and other facts Orientalists have come to the conclusion that the original home of the Babylonian Turanians was the mountainous district of Central Asia. The name "Akkad" given to a portion of their old settlements, signifies in their language 'mountain or high-country'—a name given in remembrance of their old home although it was at variance with the character of the locality in which they now dwelt.

The Turanians were followed by the Semites, who gradually extended their sway over the whole of Babylonia. The two nations

1. Robertton—*Voices of the past*, P. 165.
2. Lenormant—Chaldean Magic, p. 359.
3. Roberton—*Voices of the past, p. 28.*
4. Lenormant *Op. cit.*, p. 360.

soon amalgamated and came to have the same religious beliefs in common. The Semitic language was used by both for ordinary purposes, the Akkadian was reserved for religious literature. The Semites must have arrived much earlier than 4000 B.C., for in the time of Sargon (3800 B.C.) they had already succeeded in building up an empire. There are many indications that they too came from the North.[1]

So it appears that the original home of the Babylonians was Central Asia—the same regions which were occupied by the Indo-Iranian nation. That these Iranian regions were not occupied solely by the Aryans but were peopled by non-Aryan nations as well, appears also from the Avesta.[2]

Another circumstance that points to the dwelling together of the nations speaking the Indo-Iranian and the Turanian languages is the mysterious signification they attributed to certain numbers. '60' was one of the numbers to which such importance was given by the Babylonians. A cycle of 60 years was called 'Sos' 10 Sos a 'Ner', and 60 sos a 'Ser'. The Chinese—another Turanian nation—have also a sacred cycle of 60 years. The Hindus too reckon by 'Brihaspati' cycles of similar numbers of years; and besides they divide the day into 60 'ghatis,' each 'ghati' into 60 'pals'

Another sacred number both among the Turanians and the Aryans is '7'. A week of seven days is an institution in almost all these nations, and the days of the week are named from the same celestial objects and in the same order.

A Babylonian goddess *Davkina*, the wife of Hea, bears the same name as *Devki*, the mother of the Hindu God Krishna.

All these circumstances point to the fact that the Babylonian Turanians, before they came down to the plains watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates, dwelt with the Indo-Aryans in the countries of Central Asia.[3]

This then explains the presence of Iranian Gods in the Babylonian pantheon, the similarity in Geographical names, and the sprinkling of Avesta words in the Babylonian language. The latter

1. Roberton—*Voice of the past* p. 46.

2. Geiger—*Civilization of the Eastern Iranians*, translation of Dastur Darab Vol. I, p. 19-24.

3. A passage from the Gathas seems to allude to this circumstance. In the 3rd Gatha (Yasna XLIV) we find Zoroaster complaining of the hostility of a certain person mentioned as "the very strong Bendva.' This person must have been a Turanian of the same race as the people so frequently referred to above, for we have seen that 'Banda', in the Akkadian language, means 'strong'.

people had made these things their own when they were dwelling with the Iranians in the same regions, and when they came down to their new home they of course brought these ideas along with them.[1]

It now remains to be seen *when* they separated, whether before the advent of Zoroaster or after.

When we see that the worship of the Iranian Yazatas SRAOSHA, HAURVAT and ASHI was prevalent with the Babylonians in the most ancient times and also bear in mind that these Yazatas are of a post-Zoroastrian age, the only conclusion that we can come to is that the separation must have taken place some time after the age of Zoroaster. We find the Babylonians already settled and having an established government in B.C. 4500, and supposing that they had come down only a hundred years earlier, the latest date that we can assign to the separation would be about B.C. 4600. If we add to this about four to five hundred years, the least period necessary for the abstract ideas of the time of Zoroaster to crystallize into *Yezata* forms, we come upon B.C. 5000 as the point in the time-horizon beyond which we should direct our mental telescope to look for the age of the Iranian Lawgiver. It is possible that the age may be still earlier[2], and perhaps further researches in Babylonia and Persia may tend to corroborate the statements of the ancient Greek writers who assigned to Zoroaster the era of 6000 years before Plato, although the evidence already to hand does not carry us so far. But the field of research is not yet exhausted. Many inscriptions and monuments

1. A similar opinion is expressed by Bunsen in *Egypt's place in Universal History*. He says : "The two great formative branches of the human race, the Semitic and Aryan, exhibit indelible marks of their common origin, in language and reminiscences of the antediluvian foretime, and the civilisation of the premeval world, which were interwoven into the traditions of each Each commenced a course of independent development by which humanity was raised one step higher.....Babylon forms the point of junction of the separate Aryan and Semitic systems of religion and of thought.

The strong influence exercised over mankind by Magism emanated from Chaldea, though its origin was Aryan, that is Zoroastrian. We can find no root for *Mag*, the Magian (the mighty), in Hebrew or Chaldee. The reason why this influence was so strongly exercised by the Chaldea arose partly from its more western position and partly from the preponderance of Chaldean astronomy and astrology over those of the Aryan as well as old-Egyptian population." (BK IV, Part VII).

2. I believe a different line of inquiry also leads to this conclusion. The Iranians regarded the star Tishtriya (i. e Sirius), or rather the Yazata presiding over the star, as the God of Rain. In Yasht VIII the acronycal rising of the star is anxiously looked for as being the harbinger of the rainy season. In Central Asia, the original home of the Iranians, this season sets in soon after the Autumnal Equinox, and therefore in some very ancient time when Sirius was identified as the Rain-bringing God the star must have been about 180° apart from the Sun, at the time of the Autumnal Equinox; that is to say the Right Ascension of the star must have been then somewhere near 0°. At present the Right Ascension of the star is 100°, which has been brought about by the lapse of about 72 x 100 = 7200 years, according to the law of the Precession of the Equinoxes. This takes us back to the period of about 5300 B. C. for the antiquity of Tishtriya worship, which seems to be post-Zoroastrian, since the star-god had a different name among the Vedic Indians.

are being unearthed every year, many still remain to be deciphered; and when these shall have all unbosomed themselves of the secrets they hold, the mist that envelopes the age of that renowned philosopher and prophet of antiquity will, at no very distant date, be dispersed, and we shall be in a position to gauge more accurately the distance that separate him from us. As it is, the Babylonian inscriptions have rendered no little service in the matter. They have amply repaid the debt which they owed to the inscriptions of the Zoroastrian king Darius for furnishing the key to their decipherment.

In conclusion, I have only to add that my acquaintance with the Babylonian and the Avesta literatures not being first hand, I may, very likely, have gone astray in some respects; but though my conclusions might not be held valid on all points, it would be a matter of satisfaction to me even if this paper merely serves to direct researches into a new channel, which might lead to fresh discoveries concerning the Zoroastrian religion.

[END]

[**Note** : We have been approached by some scholars that this important article may be re-printed in a pamphlet form for wider conculation. We approve of the suggestion. Ed. I. L. Q.]

—:o:—

THE AGE OF ZARATHUSHTRA

Regarding the Age of Zarathushtra, the following quotation from "CHRONOLOGY", (1866) p. 33, by Kavasji Sohrabji Patell, will be found interesting:—

> "About ninety two years ago that is, in the year 1142 of Yezdezered, or 1772 of the Christian era, the President of the Parsi Panchayet of Surat, Muncherjee Cursetjee, received a Mahajur, signed by thirty seven learned Dastoors, Mobeds, and Behedeens inhabitants of Yezd in Persia, certifying that the Anniversary of the birthday of Zoroaster was Khordad, the sixth day of Ferverdeen, the 1st month on Monday, 2715 years (according to the Persian computation) from the Deluge haveing been completed and the sixth day of 2716 reached, when Zoroaster was born."

(The period of Deluge is placed at 10,000 years, out of which when 2716 years are deducted, the birthday of Zarathushtra would be placed at 7,284 years. Ed. I. L. Q.)

—:o:—

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Willard G. Oxtoby

FATWA ON THE RIGHTS OF ZOROASTRIANS.

—:o:—

"The vex and humiliate the Zoroastrian community or other non-Muslims, who are under the protection of Islam is unlawful, and it is obligatory on all Muslims duly to observe the injunctions of **His Holiness the Seal of the Prophets,** respecting their good treatment, the winning of their affections, and the guarding of their lives, honour and possessions, nor should they swerve by so much as a hair's breadth from this, please God Almighty."

— Mujtahid of Karballa.

(21-2-1910)

PARSIS & PERSIA.

—:o:—

" ... Anything which serves to strengthen the bonds between the Zoroastrians and their ancient home is worthy of all commendation and support; I think you will find amongst the younger generation of Persians in Persia a very much more friendly feeling,—indeed a warm admiration,—for the Church of Zoroaster. The truth is that the talk about the "unchanging East" which people are so fond of indulging in here is great nonsense, and the change of outlook in Persia since the Revolution of 1906 has been very great."

Prof. E. G. Browne.

(7-3-1923)

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